

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A clip reel for use in packaging equipment, the reel comprising:
a spool;

a metal strip having a length and a plurality of loops spaced along the length of the metal strip, the metal strip having several coils spiral wound about the spool and a free end of the metal strip extending from one of said several coils into a direction of unwinding of the metal from the spool, and

a retaining device which forms a releasable connection between two points on the metal strip, a first ~~point~~ end of the retaining device engaging the metal strip close to the free end of the metal strip and a second ~~point~~ end of the retaining device engaging one of the plurality of loops in one of a metal strip segment which is part of a different coil than the coil from which the free end of the metal strip extends ~~and a point on the spool~~,

wherein the formed connection has a shape-mated design which secures the reel against unwinding at the free end.

2. (Previously Presented) The reel of claim 1, wherein the retaining device comprises two spatially separated functional ends.
3. (Previously Presented) The reel of claim 2, wherein the first end of the retaining device comprises a lug ring, which catches a first loop of a first coil of the metal strip and snugly accommodates the entire width of the metal strip, and wherein the second end of the retaining device comprises a hook which latches into a second loop of a second coil of the metal strip.
4. (Previously Presented) The reel of claim 3, wherein the hook is a carabiner hook.
5. (Previously Presented) The reel of claim 1, wherein the retaining device is made entirely of synthetic material.

6. (Previously Presented) The reel of claim 5, wherein the retaining device is cast as a one-piece part.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) A method for preventing a metal strip wound about a spool from unwinding, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a spool having a metal strip spiral wound about the spool in a plurality of coils, the metal strip having a plurality of loops spaced along a length of the metal strip and a free end extending from one of said plurality of coils;

providing a retaining device having a shaft, a lug ring at a first end, and a hook at a second end;

threading the free end of the metal strip through the lug ring of the retaining device until the lug ring is positioned about a first loop of a first coil of the metal strip near the free end;

latching the hook end of the retaining device into a second loop of a second coil of the metal strip wherein the retaining device prevents the metal strip from unwinding from the spool.